



RCASU Trustee Board Meeting - Agenda
20 September 2023
Senior Common Room & Online

Attendees:

Jacqui Moore, Chair	JM
Jane Crumpton-Taylor, Vice-Chair	JCT
John Schless (College observer)	JS
Frank Brown, Lay Trustee	FB
Ed Pearson, Lay Trustee	EP
Faith Johnson, Student Trustee	FJ
Kimberley Burrows, Student Trustee & Sabbatical Officer	KB
Thomas Cury, Student Trustee & Sabbatical Officer	TC
Ryan Lea, Secretary & Director	RL

1. Welcome & Apologies

Ed Pearson absent with apologies

2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest

3. Previous Board Meeting

3.1 Minutes/Actions from Previous Board of Trustees Meeting

Approved	Y/N
Minutes of Previous Board Meeting	Y
Minutes of Finance Committee	Y

Action	Responsibility	Status
Explore Focus Groups (current students and Alumni) to help with engagement	RL	Ongoing plan - will look to engage with PHD and international students as per comms strategy from October

4. Reports

4.1 Chairs Report

No comments

4.2 Sabbatical Officer's Report

- KB is working with the RNIB for accessible signage across campuses, and a website that we can use to print Braille has been found.
- Events over the past few weeks, such as convocation ceremonies and Welcome Week, were successful. Student engagement during welcome week was high, especially interest towards societies.
- JS questioned the Officer representation for student assessments and events (exhibitions, shows), which was not covered in the report. TC stated that last year, the SU was not involved in these things but as of this year we are back on the committees and students will also be involved in local organising committees.
- FB requested sections on key actions in the Sabbatical Officer report.
- JS noted the efforts of the SOs were appreciated in the past few (hectic) weeks.

4.3 Director's Report

- JCT asked what the budget code for the Participatory budget was. This has been set up under the EDI fund income (currently being set up by FB, finance officer). Confirmations are still needed on the numbers.
- FB asked about the SU relationship with Imperial, and whether our students have access to their societies, which, according to records, we do. We are also up to 14 societies, which is 7 down from last year but there are many more proposals for new societies to follow up on.
- JCT commented that the communal participatory budget for small initiatives is a good system.
- The success of the ArtBar has certainly helped with student engagement, as well as College communications advertising our events during Welcome Week.
- FB noted the lack of promotion for external student shows, so this can be improved this year.

4.4 Finance Report (EOY/July)

- JCT confirmed that all figures are now available on the drive. We also have a planned deficit. JCT also noted that these will not be the final figure. It will be adjusted post-audit.
- JS celebrated the impressive 12-month financial turnaround.
- FB requested that the annual report include more positive feedback to reflect successes. JCT and JM agreed on the huge progress against the objectives of the year - the annual report will reflect this in future.
- TC is the new SO on the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee
- JS noted that the attention we want to gain is from the College at senate and the Governors at Council when updating about the reflections of the past year. We should share successes, alongside challenges and utilisation of reserves.

5. Current Affairs

5.1 CIO

- JCT notes that Ceri continues in the project management role and liaising with the solicitors, and has sent over a summary which shows the action and the timelines. We are now waiting for the charity commission to agree to the conflict of interests. As soon as received, we can get the transfer done. Noted template minutes, which the old (current) union and the new CIO union will use as a record of their final and first meeting, were planned to have finalised these subject to the Conflict of Interest authorisation and transfer approval. However acknowledged would be better to wait and then conduct the meetings online. Ceri, RL and JCT will check the templates.

- JCT noted that once authorisation is complete, the RCASU should return to amending the bylaws by the end of the calendar year. Reiterated the amendments are to make them as accessible as possible so students are able to engage with them. RL suggested a bylaws working group. This works in tandem with TC's manifesto goal around transparency.
- TC will raise questions with RL, but also wishes to involve other members of the student body in the conversation. TC and RL to follow up with student trustees, including FJ.
- JS pointed out that the formal approval of the CIO is today (20th September). JM noted that consent needs to be confirmed via email separately to the meeting. Transfer date 1st November. Attendees agreed with the notion that a separate meeting will take place regarding the CIO, details TBC.

5.2 Impact Report 2022/23

- FB has made comments on the document. JCT noted that the document must be easy to understand as it will be visible to the public. JS requested document access, and also noted that the doc should include some positive statistics. TC requests that acronyms are clarified and checked. KB has no context for the images as they do not have alt text - RL to add this.
- TC questioned the detail of the successes, and KB and JM agree that more detail is required to show our successes, so this will be ensured going forward. JCT added that the impact report should have a section about plans for the following year, to make sure there is transparency about what still needs to be worked on.
- JM has other feedback noted on hard copy of the report from proofreading and will provide to RL after the meeting.

5.3 Strategic Plan Review

- Comments available on the document. RL and FB agree that the Strategic Plan Review can be updated before each board meeting.
- JS - on rep structures and academic experience, during this new academic year, we need to push the College and the student experience audit to implement feedback ideas in our best interests.

5.4 Reserve Policy

- RL will put all figures and calculations in an appendix at the end of the doc upon the suggestions from JCT and FB.
- On the reserves holding £249,000, JS felt that this is too high a figure. JM concurred and questioned perhaps a range might be appropriate, as this figure is a target. Currently this could prevent the sign off of something for student benefit if we were held to this annual figure.
- JCT notes that the auditors are happy with the figure, and disagrees with the notion that the figure is too high. FJ and KB have no issues.
- JS suggests that the reserve policy will need to be shown to the CFO, and will share his concerns with the College as to the high value.
- JM was concerned about wording around section 1.24, where under accounting terminology, reserves include designated funds, whereas under the charity commission definition reserves exclude designated funds. The wording going into section 2.3 does not reflect that clearly, as it begins to talk about a target level and the use of designated funds for investment purposes. JS added that the minimum for reserve is £149,000. RL to look over the wording on this and when talking about 'fixed amounts'.
- JCT stated that we need the reserves if an opportunity arises that requires more than 4 months worth of reserve money.
- JS disagreed, and added that the SU receives more money due to having a venue, although it does not make a profit, so a higher reserve might not be necessary as there is a difference between holding a minimum reserve and building up the designated funds.
- RL agreed to redraft the policy without figures to make it more general, and this will then be circulated via email.

5.5 Health & Safety Policy

- JS noted that the SU represents its own health and safety, but the building is the responsibility of the College.
- KB questioned the online training section, but this is just a lengthy course that the SOs are yet to complete.

5.6 Code of Conduct

- FJ questions who the code of conduct is intended for. RL replied that the code of conduct is for current members (students), and once it has been passed it will be made available to all students. FJ questioned the existence of an earlier version, and it was confirmed that there was no previous code of conduct.
- FB requested that a process be in place to inform students about the code of conduct so they are aware of it.
- JS noted that a disciplinary issue will go through a misconduct process from the College. Suggested a line in the policy stating that the College conduct code will override that of the SU.
- TC questioned the resolution process. JS - an informal resolution is the preferred outcome, and there are very few College misconduct investigations per year.
- FB wishes to make it a condition of membership to abide by the SU code of conduct, although RL questioned the logistics of this communication. Make it very visible at the start of the academic year. FJ noted that it should be added into the student handbook, which is widely viewed, and the website.

5.7 Risk Register

- RL is still working on the scoring (to be reviewed with FB as Finance and Risk Committee rep), and noted that the document will be fluid as ongoing review will be required once live. The risk register will sit alongside the risk and issue log, and so will be present at every board. JM requests a clear differentiation be stated as to what objects belong on the risk register and what belongs on the risk and issue log. On the risk register are larger items which change less frequently and are unlikely to be closed off. From a board perspective, getting it spotlighted if something is recommended for changing can make it an accessible way for the board to know if an entry has been amended, or a new entry has been added.
- FB noted that ongoing management of the register has been delegated to the finance committee (which is noted in the terms of reference), even though it is not purely a financial risk. At the finance committee meetings, it can be minuted which issues have changed/been added to ensure brought up during the trustee board. FB noted that a scheduled point for a full review is needed, which would usually take place annually.
- KB: Using a screen reader on the tables included in documents is not fully accessible, so it was questioned how to access the information in a better way. RL will look into transferring this over to a Google doc, and JM will review the level of detail needed. The minutes of the finance committee will call out any changes to these documents and tables if necessary.

5.8 Risk & Issues Log - queries/amends/new entries

- This document also has multiple tables and columns, so this will need to be reviewed for KB and general clarity as well.
- JM recognises that the risk and issue log is a lot more detailed, although it has not been reviewed closely of late from a finance and risk perspective due to the current focus on the CIO.
- Board members report having trouble accessing this doc. RL will follow up with this.
- JM also requested clarity on document content at the top of the page.
- JM and RL will take a full review, and call out any changes and closures during the next board. FB noted that it also needs to be cross referenced with the risk register. Anything on the risk and issue log that needs to be on the risk register will be added.

6. AOB

6.1

Board members to be subscribed to the Students' Union newsletter!

Action	Responsibility	Status
Section to be added on key actions in SO report	KB and TC	
More successes to be included in the annual report	RL	
Reviewing the template minutes before the CIO is confirmed	Ceri, RL and JCT	
Alt text for the impact report images	RL	
Transferring information from the risk register off tables	RL	
Reviewing and updating the risk and issue log	RL and JM	
Recruitment for JCT's replacement role	RL	
Explore Focus Groups (current students and Alumni) to help with engagement	RL	Ongoing plan - will look to engage with PHD and international students as per comms strategy from October

Next Board Meeting - 13 December, 2023